

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method for representing records, the method comprising:
2 assigning a unique identifier to a record stored at a record collection site;
3 entering the unique identifier in a hierarchical tree structure; and
4 sending the hierarchical tree structure to a central storage site.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprises:
2 using the unique identifier to produce an aggregate report; and
3 sending the aggregate report to the central storage site.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1 further comprises:
2 using the unique identifier at the central storage site to access the record
3 stored at the record collection site.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the unique identifier includes information
2 representing a node located in the hierarchical tree structure.
- 1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the node is located in a higher position of the
2 hierarchical tree structure than the unique identifier.
- 1 6. The method of claim 2, wherein using the unique identifier to produce the
2 aggregate report includes counting the unique identifier with a second unique identifier
3 assigned to a second record stored at the record collection site.
- 1 7. The method of claim 2, wherein using the unique identifier to produce an
2 aggregate report includes summing data included in the record accessed by the unique
3 identifier with data included in a second record accessed by a second unique identifier.
- 1 8. The method of claim 4, wherein a unique key that includes information
2 representing a second node in the hierarchical tree structure is assigned to the node.
- 1 9. A computer program product, tangibly embodied in an information carrier, for
2 representing records, the computer program product being operable to cause a machine to:
3 assign a unique identifier to a record stored at a record collection site;

4 enter the unique identifier in a hierarchical tree structure; and
5 send the hierarchical tree structure to the central storage site.

1 10. The computer program product of claim 9, being further operable to cause a
2 machine to:

3 use the unique identifier to produce an aggregate report; and
4 send the aggregate report to a central storage site.

1 11. The computer program product of claim 9, being further operable to cause a
2 machine to:

3 use the unique identifier at the central storage site to access the record stored
4 at the record collection site.

1 12. The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the unique identifier includes
2 information representing a node located in the hierarchical tree structure.

1 13. The computer program product of claim 12, wherein the node is located in a
2 higher position of the hierarchical tree structure than the unique identifier.

1 14. The computer program product of claim 10, wherein using the unique identifier
2 to produce the aggregate report includes counting the unique identifier with a second unique
3 identifier assigned to a second record stored in at the record collection site.

1 15. The computer program product of claim 10, wherein using the unique identifier
2 to produce the aggregate report includes summing data included in the record accessed by the
3 unique identifier with data included in a second record accessed by a second unique
4 identifier.

1 16. The computer program product of claim 12, wherein a unique key that includes
2 information representing a second node in the hierarchical tree structure is assigned to the
3 node.

1 17. A method for representing records, the method comprising:

2 receiving a hierarchical tree structure at a central storage site from a record
3 collection site, the hierarchical tree structure includes a unique identifier assigned to a
4 record stored at the record collection site.

1 18. The method of claim 17 further comprising:

2 using the unique identifier to access the record stored at the record collection
3 site.

1 19. The method of claim 17 further comprising:

2 receiving an aggregate report at the central storage site produced at the record
3 collection site using the unique identifier.

1 20. The method of claim 17, wherein the unique identifier includes information
2 representing a node located in the hierarchical tree structure.

1 21. A method for representing records, the method comprising:

2 assigning a unique identifier to a record stored at a record collection site;
3 entering the unique identifier in a hierarchical tree structure at the record
4 collection site;
5 sending the hierarchical tree structure to a central storage site; and
6 using the unique identifier at the central storage site to access the record
7 stored at the record collection site.

1 22. The method of claim 21, wherein the unique identifier at the record collection
2 site is used to produce an aggregate report that is sent to the central storage site.

1 23. The method of claim 21, wherein the unique identifier includes information
2 representing a node located in the hierarchical tree structure.

1 24. A system comprising:

2 a record collection site that includes a computer system that assigns a unique
3 identifier to a record stored at the record collection site and enters the unique identifier in a
4 hierarchical tree structure; and

5 a central storage site that receives the hierarchical tree structure from the record
6 collection site.

1 25. The system of claim 24, wherein the computer system at the record collection site
2 uses the unique identifier to produce an aggregate report and initiates transmission of the
3 aggregate report to the central storage site.

1 26. The system of claim 24, wherein the unique identifier includes information
2 representing a node located in the hierarchical tree structure.